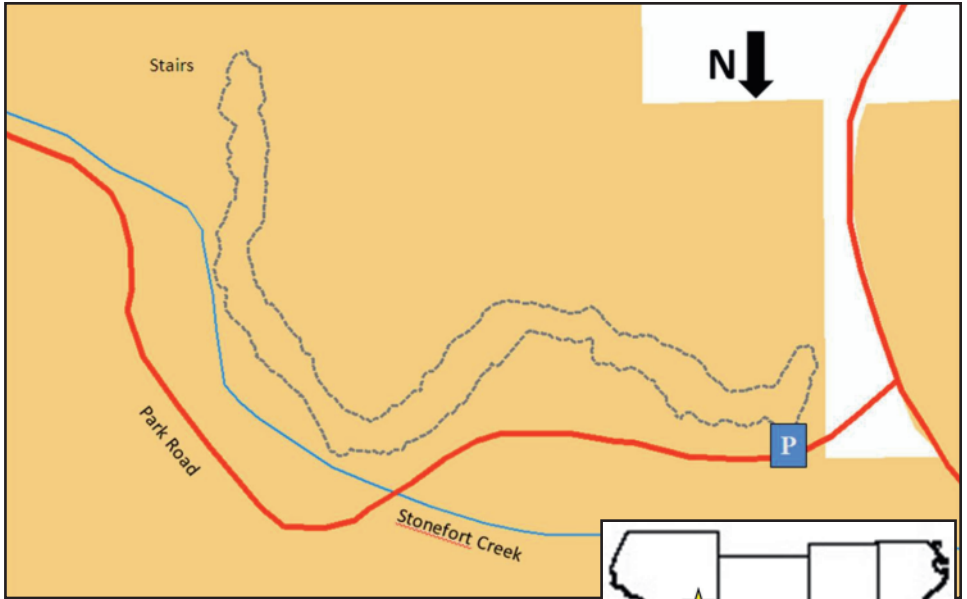


Trillium Trail

Giant City State Park

2 mile - Moderate Rating

Trailhead: 37.6249, -89.2037



Trillium Trail is perhaps the most visited hiking trail in southern Illinois. This two-mile loop trail, completely within the Fern Rocks Nature Preserve, meanders both below and above a large sandstone bluff, the prominent geological feature of this area. Hikers need to know that a steep and somewhat long set of stairs awaits them at the east end of the trail, though once on top of the bluff the walking is flat and easy with some gentle switch-backs leading back down the bluff on the west end. From the trailhead, go left along the bottom of the bluff to get right into the wildflowers. You should be able to easily find some of the very earliest spring wildflowers, such as harbinger-of-spring, spring beauties and toothwort. The trail gets its name from the amazingly beautiful display of white and purple trilliums that occur below the bluff among the large boulders that lie scattered as a reminder that erosive powers helped form this area. Other common wildflowers along this trail are yellow trout lily, dutchman's breeches, squirrel corn, waterleaf, phacelia and valerian.

The low woods on either side of the road that runs along the northern edge of the nature preserve boasts one of the most impressive displays of blue-eyed Mary flowers in southern Illinois. It is truly a sight everyone should witness. While the areas below the bluff contain most of the showy wildflowers, the section above the bluff should not be overlooked as it can provide hikers with views of unique species, such as cleft phlox and false dandelion.

This trail is located on the north end of Giant City State Park next to the small town of Makanda. The small trailhead parking lot only has room for 6-8 vehicles and is often filled to capacity. In that case, you can park at the nearby Shelter One parking lot and access the trail via a short spur just across the bridge. More information on this trail and other hiking opportunities at Giant City can be found at the Visitor Center.

Notable wildflowers present at site

White trillium
Trillium flexipes

Celandine poppy
Stylophorum diphyllum

Yellow trout lily
Erythronium americanum

Harbinger of spring
Erigenia bulbosa

Blue-eyed Mary
Collinsia verna



A field of blue-eyed Mary. White trillium (inset)